



WRITERSTALK

Volume 28
Number 11
November 2020

Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club™

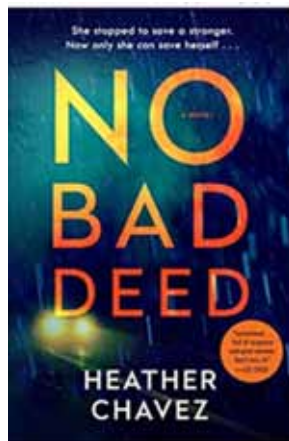
ZOOM MEETING RECAP: OCTOBER

NOVEMBER SPEAKER: HEATHER CHAVEZ

Pace Your Narrative Like a Pro

by Jamal Khan

Hitting the right pace and mastering the art of timing can ensure success across a wide range of domains, from sports to music. Writing is no exception. A talented writer rises above the words, sentences, and paragraphs, soaring high overhead to glimpse the overarching ebb and flow of the narrative. The best works are invariably stretched taut, such that they can be plucked like the string of a violin, producing a rich, multi-layered melody of meaning. Just as a stand-up comedian instinctively pauses before delivering a punchline, a seasoned writer seeds the narrative with intriguing clues at carefully timed intervals, drawing the reader in before delivering the satisfying payoff. On November 9, Heather Chavez will guide us through the process of pacing your work to perfection.



After writing a few unpublished novels, which she calls her “practice books,” Heather struck gold when she completed the manuscript for *No Bad Deed*. She subsequently signed a two-book deal with William Morrow in 2018 for more than \$500,000 with foreign rights included. A Booklist review called *No Bad Deed* “an extraordinary thriller from a debut author that may well become the book everyone is talking about.” Heather believes that correctly pacing her narrative was the key that attracted her agent and publisher, and she will share her techniques with us.

Heather graduated from UC Berkeley’s English literature program before working as a reporter for the *Lake County Record Bee*, a copy editor at *The Press Democrat*, and a public affairs representative at Kaiser Permanente. During her writing journey, Heather noticed that her critique group partners were members of Redwood Writers, the Santa Rosa branch of the California Writers Club. She decided to become a member too, and is thus another success story of our organization.

Where: Zoom Online Platform (link forthcoming)

When: Monday, November 9 at 7 p.m.

Nina Amir

by Luanne Oleas

To blog a book or book a blog? That was the question posed by Nina Amir at our last meeting.

Whether ‘tis nobler to take your blog posts and create a book or to take your book and break it into blog-size bits. Either way, you can turn your blog into a book production machine (and be a success!)

No one knows this bloggy road to success better than Nina Amir, the Inspiration to Creation Coach, Author Coach, and author of the book *How to Blog a Book*, now in its 2nd edition. In addition, she has three traditionally published books and nine self-published ebooks as well as being one of only 800 elite Certified High-Performance Coaches worldwide.

Amir says bloggers and writers have two different personas. Bloggers like to promote themselves but find writing an entire book intimidating, whereas, writers just want to write and not build a platform for promotion. Unfortunately, success requires both these days.

Whether you consider yourself a writer or a blogger, you can still get to a published book. Either blog a book or book a blog.

To blog a book means intentionally writing a book from scratch on the Internet in post-sized bits using a content plan.

To book a blog means repurposing existing blog content originally written on the Internet with no thought of creating a book.

Both concepts require an online presence. Your home in cyberspace is your website. Your storefront is your blog. The trick is to point your followers, or soon-to-be followers, to both using social media and email newsletters.

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Presidential Message

Edie Matthews

President, South Bay Writers



The Blue Wedding Cake

Do you recall a memorable birthday party?

Our childhood parties were simple occasions—a cake, candles, ice cream and family. A birthday party with friends was a rare occurrence, and I only recall attending two.

In the fourth grade, my friend Mary Ann invited a group of us to an evening party. It was held at her Aunt's home, overlooking Silver Lake (in Los Angeles). We gathered in the backyard under a covered patio. It had a Hawaiian motif with palm trees and a bar made of bamboo. I felt so sophisticated perched on the bar stool sipping a coke. After dinner, her mother brought out a cake lit with candles and decorated with luscious roses. (Kids didn't get many desserts, and I never once heard someone say, "I don't like cake.") I wanted a slice with a rose, but was too polite to ask for it. Afterwards, we piled into two identical Pontiacs and were taken to a drive-in movie.

Several years later when my birthday was approaching, I wanted a party. Of course, it wouldn't be a production like Mary Ann's.

My mother, who would make the cake, asked me what kind I wanted.

Inspiration struck and I replied, "A wedding cake, chocolate with blue icing."

My mother froze. Finally, she said, "I can do that."

Preparations began. Mom read through recipes and rattled through various pots and pans figuring out what containers to use to make three layers. (I don't recall anyone's mother using a store-bought mix. Cakes were either bought at the bakery or homemade).

This was the era of stay-at-home moms. Most families only had one car, and my mother didn't even drive. So services came to you: milk delivery, produce trucks, the Fuller Brush Man, the Avon Lady. Even the photographer showed up with a pony. He provided a cowboy hat, vest, and chaps for kids to wear while striding the animal—usually a pinto.

In LA, Helm's Bakery trucks traversed the city. The driver had a distinct whistle announcing his arrival. When housewives flagged him down, he'd stop, hop out of the yellow paneled truck and open a large backdoor. He'd slide out spacious drawers filled with fresh pies: apple, boysenberry, cherry-rhubarb, lemon meringue. There were cakes, cookies, breads, and rolls, but my mother thought Helm's was too expensive.

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SBW Mission

Educating writers of all levels of expertise in the craft of writing and in the marketing of their work.

Join Us

We have a membership category that fits you. Renewal dues are \$45 for membership through June 30, 2021. Dual membership, \$25; student membership, \$20. New member, \$65. Contact Membership Chair at a meeting or sign up online at southbaywriters.com or send a check to CWC-South Bay Writers, P O Box 3254, Santa Clara, CA 95055.

WritersTalk

The monthly newsletter of South Bay Writers, the South Bay Branch of the California Writers Club

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Deadline

Submissions are due by the 15th of the month.

Submissions

SBW encourages writers at all levels of expertise to submit their creative works for publication in *WritersTalk*. All submissions should be sent to the above email address in the form of text or an attached MS Word file (sorry, no hard copy submissions can be accepted). Please prepare your work as carefully as you would for an agent. Use Times New Roman 12-font; no tabs; no colors; no page breaks. Send graphics separately as jpg files, with separate instructions for placement in the submission if placement is important.

All submissions will be copyedited. Titles and headlines subject to change. Managing Editor reserves the right to selection.

Suggested word limits (less is more):

Member Achievement / News (200 words)

News Items (400 words)

In My Opinion (300 words)

Letters to the Editor (300 words)

Creative Works

Short Fiction/Memoir (1800 words)

Poetry (200 words)

Essay/Nonfiction (1000 words)

Reprints

Authors retain all rights to their works. *WritersTalk* gratefully acknowledges the authors' permission to publish their works here. Contact individual authors for permission to reprint.

Announcements

An announcement is information of interest and value to writers that does not provide direct economic benefit to its originator and is published free of charge.

Advertisements

Advertising of workshops, conferences, and events is accepted from other branches of California Writers Club. Because California Writers Club is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, *WritersTalk* cannot accept advertising of events or services that benefit an individual. Advertise in CWC Bulletin. See page 14.

Also, we cannot accept political advertising of any kind.

Change of Address: Send changes of address to membership@southbaywriters.com

Circulation: 150

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Words from the Editor

Marjorie Bicknell Johnson
Interim Managing Editor



Commatosis

Editing is bad for my health—commas awaken me in the night. I no longer read novels for pleasure. Small errors, such as miscreant semicolons or dangling participles, leap off the page.

Sometimes a critique group gets bogged down on punctuation while missing the big how-is-the-content picture. Unfortunately, grammar rules are not as simple as those of mathematics, where 2 plus 2 always equals 4. Strunk & White's *Elements of Style* has only a few rules for commas but takes up five pages explaining them.

"In a series of three or more terms with a single conjunction, use a comma after each term except the last." Simple enough, but the comma before the conjunction, the Oxford comma, is optional unless omitting it changes the meaning of the sentence. She purchased apples, oranges, and pears, or, she purchased apples, oranges and pears. But look at this listing of Top Stories, *Sky News*, December 10, 2013: World leaders at Mandela tribute, Obama-Castro handshake and same-sex marriage date set ... I'll let you think about that one.

"Enclose parenthetical expressions between commas." Write, *My sister, you will be pleased to hear, is now in perfect health*, not *My sister you will be pleased to hear, is now in perfect health*. Write *Eleanor's husband, Colonel Nelson, paid us a visit yesterday*, using a pair of commas.

However, "No comma should separate a noun from a restrictive term of identification." That means to write *Billy the Kid* or *the novelist Stephen King* without commas. You could write *My husband Frank came home* without commas if you have one and only one husband, but strict grammarians say you need a pair of commas.

"Place a comma before a conjunction introducing an independent clause." That is, write *Mary brought her frog, and John showed off his iguana*. However, because the independent clauses are short, it is also correct to leave out the comma. How short is short?

"A participial phrase at the beginning of a sentence is followed by a comma and must refer to the grammatical subject." *Dodging the traffic, his cell phone got dropped in the street* is incorrect; the cell phone is not dodging the traffic. Instead, write *Dodging the traffic, he dropped his cell phone in the street*.

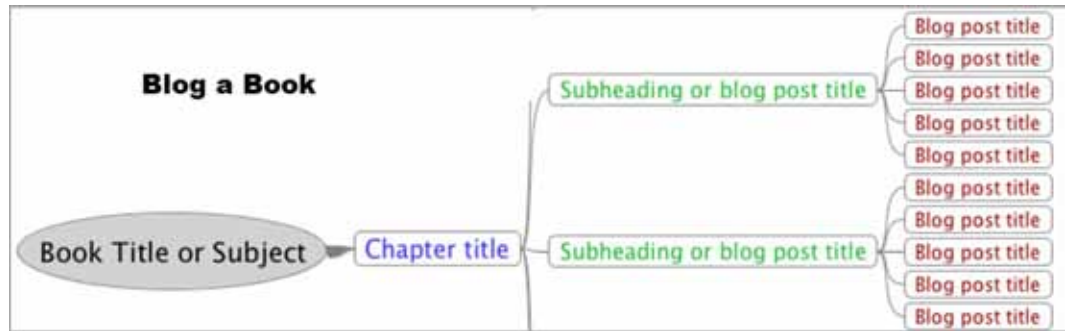
Stylistically, some people throw in commas for emphasis or to indicate a pause. I tried that some years ago, but I'm chronically short-winded, unless I'm writing an editorial. One of my manuscripts caused an editor to write, "I have never seen so many commas!"

That's it, all I know about the subject, except that I omitted the greatest comma rule of all: "When in doubt, leave it out."

Now, if you are not comatose, remember that you have to write something before you can edit it. I tried to be clever, using commatose rather than comatose, until I discovered that there actually is such a word. *Commatose* means overuse of the comma in a sentence.

After you write it, submit your masterpiece here. I will look past the commas to the content. —WT

"I have spent most of the day putting in a comma and the rest of the day taking it out." —Oscar Wilde



Continued from Page 1

Recap: Nina Amir

Either road to a book requires planning, not always a strong suit for bloggers or fiction/nonfiction writers. But going about that planning requires two different strategies.

Before you blog a book, you must 1) Choose a subject, 2) Create a business plan, 3) Hone your subject, 4) Map/outline your book's content, 5) Break your content into post-size pieces, and 6) Decide what content to save for the final product, your book.

Before you book a blog, you must do almost the same thing. However, this relies on existing content, so it's a little different. You must 1) Create a business plan, 2) Map/outline your book's content, 3) Search your blog for existing posts, and 4) Fill in content gaps with new material.

How long it takes to blog your book depends on the length of your book, the number of blog posts included, and how many of those blog posts you publish every week. For example, if your book is 20,000 words, and each of your blog posts is 600 words, you will need to write approximately 33 posts. If you

decide to complete your blogged book in six months, it will require writing 5-6 posts per month.

However long it takes, it does allow you to build a platform naturally as you blog. These days, publishers are all about established platforms and audiences.

For fiction writers, you might consider creating a blog on a nonfiction topic that establishes you as an authority on an element contained in your novel.

Amir left the club members with a challenge. Write a blog post a day, which should result in a book (or more) in a year (more or less.)

For more information, see Nina Amir's books online or her website and blogs:

<https://www.ninaamir.com>

<https://writenonfictionnow.com>

<https://www.howtoblogabook.com>

<https://www.ninaamir.com/blog>

<https://www.mysoncandance.com>

To blog! Perchance to succeed. Ay, there's the ticket. — WT

View From the Board

by Marjorie Johnson

Nine of us Zoomed it on Wednesday, October 8: President Edie Matthews, VP Jamal Khan, Secretary Marjorie Johnson, Treasurer Trenton Myers, Membership Chair Inga Silva, Web Editor Tatyana Grinenko, Member-at-Large Alfred Jan, Central Board Rep Bill Baldwin, and NORCAL Board Rep Dave LaRoche.

Website issues. President Edie Mathews said we're going to use BlueHost as our hosting provider. They'll be cheaper than the provider we've been using. Our website was fine. The problem was that our provider's firewall was breached and their security was lacking. (Note: I went there today, October 17, and found as many broken links as before. You can reach me at marjohnson89@earthlink.net. MJ)

Newsletter. SBW needs to find a new newsletter editor by the end of the year. Marjorie won't be able to continue it next year.

Writing Contest. Dave LaRoche said we had previously talked about a writing contest; we could do one virtually.

Christmas Party. A virtual one? So, what do you think?

Next Board meeting: 7 p.m., Wednesday, November 4. Next general meeting: Monday, 7 p.m., November 4, all on Zoom. — WT

Les Prose Comics

by Ken Roberge (Kendad)



SBW Halloween Costume Contest

LITERARY:

Vanessa "Prof Amelia Rumford"
Book: Dr. Who and the Stones of Blood
(4th Doc, AKA Tom Baker is best)



SCARIEST:

Anna Koster
"Lady in Red"
And her jilted lover



FUNNIEST:

Lu-Annie Oakley



PRETTIEST:

David Strom
"The Green Lantern"



ORIGINAL:

Edie "Da Rappuh" Matthews
She rapped too fa-fa-fa-fast.



South Bay Writers Club

October 12, 2020



Above: Edie "Da Rappuh" Matthews

Graphic by Kelly Harrison, embellished by Carolyn Donnell

BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

Death on the Funeral Yacht

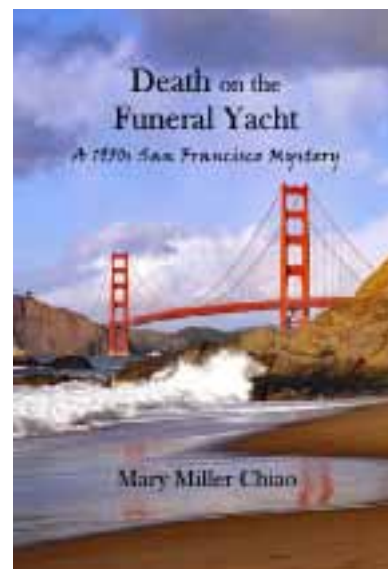
by Mary Miller Chiao

Jane Kitteridge dreams of being an attorney in San Francisco during the 1950s. She puts herself through school, graduates close to the top of her law class, and easily passes the bar. But positions are few for women in the male-dominated legal field. With her savings depleted, she has no choice but to take a position as secretary to flamboyant attorney, Jay Lucas.

In 1959, he falls to his death from the deck of *The Dearly Departed* while dispersing the ashes of his lover into the Bay. Was it an accident?

My first book, *Death on the Funeral Yacht*, is available on Lulu.com, Amazon, and Barnes & Noble. A grateful thank you to everyone for your encouragement. Check out my website for bio, reviews, blog, and my short story, "Rest in Peace, Roscoe," that appeared in *The California Writers Club Literary Review*.

<https://www.MaryMillerChiao.com>



Continued from Page 2

Presidential Message

For my cake, mom purchased decorations from the grocery store. They had candied letters spelling HAPPY BIRTHDAY, candied flowers, and silver balls the size of BBs. These would loosen your teeth if you bit into them just right (or just wrong). She also bought wedding cake decorations, white candy doves.

The party was held in our backyard. An old picnic table was camouflaged under a flowered tablecloth. My mom brought out her best dessert plates and silverware. (We used demitasse spoons.) There were also the usual accoutrements: ice cream and soda and tall glasses in case you wanted to make a float. But placed in the center of it all was the three-layer *pièce de résistance*.

I was delighted when my girlfriends exclaimed, “Wow, a blue wedding cake!”

What I loved about my mother was, whether she was making my First Communion dress or refashioning my Easter hat, the project became paramount.

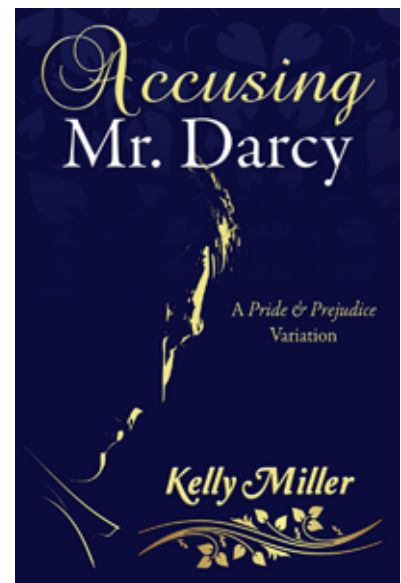
Perhaps these creative projects were an escape from the worries of overdue bills or late mortgage payments. (Her sister held the mortgage, and she would never foreclose on us—even though one time we were six months behind.)

Fortunately, I got hit by a car. (It ran over my arm—but didn’t break it.) The settlement got us caught up on all our bills and provided enough money for me to get four new petticoats and a new bicycle (an English racer). But that’s another story. —WT

Editor’s note: The “Presidential Message” reminded me that as the oldest person in my family, I have a duty to pass on my memories of times far different from now but still the same for human relationships. Last week, my daughter asked me what I remembered about my mother’s mother. Her hearing aids—

Grandma, five feet tall, had a hearing aid battery as large as my uncle’s box of poker chips. It bulged out under her dress above her bosom and was connected to wires that led to tan disks clipped over her ears. Even so, everyone yelled to communicate.

That led to other memories. Perchance you will take this opportunity to reminisce with your family and share with us at WT.



BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

Accusing Mr. Darcy

by Kelly Miller

My latest book, *Accusing Mr. Darcy*, was published on August 30, 2020.

Here is the blurb:

Could Fitzwilliam Darcy harbor a shocking, sinister secret?

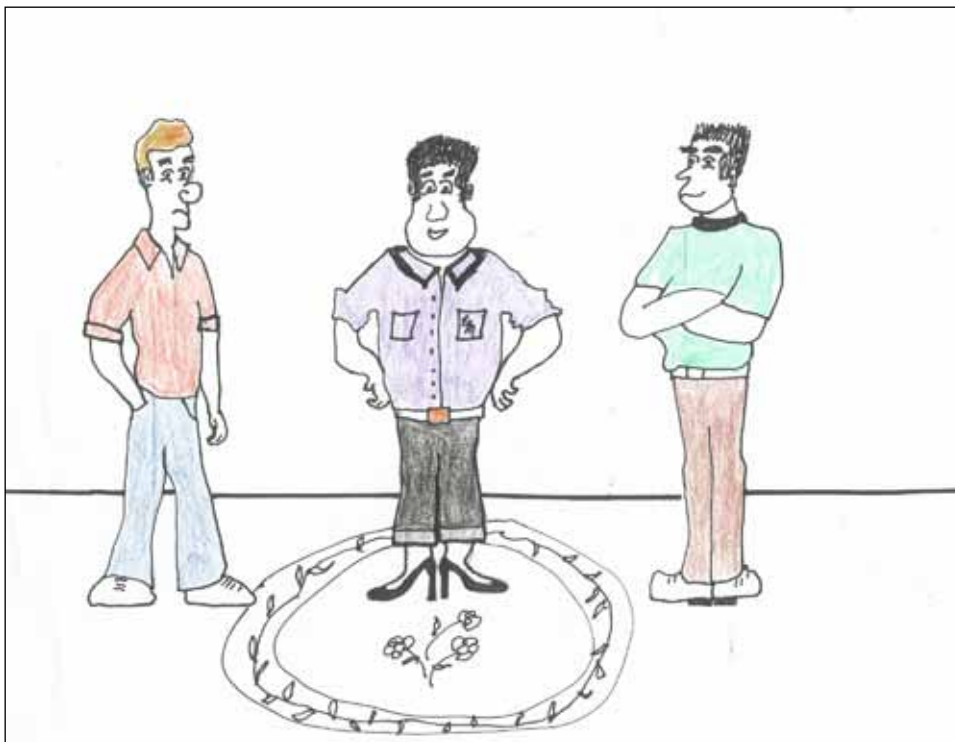
Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet count themselves among the many guests of the Kendall family, whose estate lies amidst the picturesque hills, gorges, and rocky slopes of the Peak District in Derbyshire. Elizabeth’s cousin Rose Kendall believes her dashing brother-in-law, Captain James Kendall, is Elizabeth’s ideal match. Rose’s husband, Nicholas, hopes his good friend Darcy—a rich, proud, and taciturn gentleman with a spotless reputation—will fancy one of the other eligible lady guests.

News of a brutal killing at a neighboring estate sends a wave of shock through the genial group of friends and family. When one of the Kendalls’ guests is attacked, all of the gentlemen become suspects, but the former Bow Street runner tasked with investigating the crime finds the evidence against Mr. Darcy particularly compelling.

In this romantic mystery, the beloved couple from Jane Austen’s *Pride & Prejudice* cross paths with a ruthless killer. When faced with dire warnings against Mr. Darcy, will Elizabeth heed them or follow the dictates of her heart? —WT

Off the Shelf

—Edie Matthews



“Why? Well, to fully understand your character, you have to walk in her shoes.”



NONFICTION ARTICLE

The Right to Write Fiction

by Evie Preston

From the *Wall Street Journal's* always clever Notable & Quotable: "The Right to Write Fiction." Excerpted from Novelist Lionel Shriver's 9/8/20 speech, Brisbane Writers Festival: Transcribed by the Guardian. Shortened and paraphrased by Evie Preston

Current ideologies challenge the right to write fiction! What's newly "allowed" is so tippy-toed and hedged...why bother with the drivel at all?

It started at Bowdoin College in Maine. Two student government members threw a tequila-themed birthday party for a friend with—the horror—mini-sombreros as favors, and donned by some. Social Media photos caused campus-wide outrage. School administrators threatened the "culprits" with an investigation into an "act of ethnic stereotyping." The party-favor hats constituted...ta da! "cultural appropriation."

The tie to writing fiction? The moral of the sombrero scandal? You're not supposed to try on other people's hats! Yet fiction

writers are paid to step into other people's shoes all the time—and try on their hats!

This latest ethos has spun well beyond the campus—any tradition, experience, costume, way of doing or saying things associated with a minority or disadvantaged group is: Look but don't touch. Those who embrace their vast range of "identities"—ethnicities, nationalities, races, sexual and gender categories, economic under-privilege, and disability—are encouraged to be possessive of their experience and consider any attempts by others to participate in their lives or traditions, actively or imaginatively, as a form of theft.

"Who Owns Culture? Appropriation and Authenticity in American Law" author, Susan Scafidi (Law Prof. Fordham U.) is white; she defines "cultural appropriation" as "taking intellectual property, traditional knowledge, cultural expression or artifacts from another's culture without permission. It includes unauthorized use of dress, dance, music, language, folklore, cuisine, traditional meds, religious symbols, etc."

As fiction writers are we to seek "permission" to use characters from another race or culture, the vernacular of other groups? Maybe we need to ask passers-by to sign and grant limited rights to employ an

Indonesian character in Chapter 12, like getting candidates on the ballot?

The writer is hopeful that this concept, "cultural appropriation" is a passing fad. Rubbing up against others with different backgrounds and exchanging ideas and practices is one of the most productive, fascinating aspects of modern urban life. —WT

Member News

by Marjorie Johnson

Betty Auchard reports that her fourth book, *Posing Naked and Other True Tales*, is now available on Amazon. I expect it to be as light and humorous as her other three.

Mary Chiao's first book, *Death on the Funeral Yacht*, appears on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Lulu.com.

Penelope Cole's story, "A Post Pandemic World," will be included in the High Desert Writers *Survival* anthology. And there's more: her poem "I am old" and her memoir, "Christmas Gifts Galore," will be in Tri-Valley's anthology.

Kelly Miller's book, *Accusing Mr. Darcy*, has been on Amazon since August 30.

Way to go, all four of you! Write on!

To appear here, send your writing news to marjohnson89@earthlink.net. —WT

Waiting for the Five-forty

by Dave LaRoche

The five-forty is always on time—never a minute one way or the other. A man waiting alone is early, which gives him some time to think. He paces—a hesitant ambulation, hands in his pockets, head tipped low, a view of his shoes freshly buffed.

The old station needs maintenance, paint peeling and fading, windows barely transparent, spider webs everywhere the wind doesn't blow but the sun is attendant. The deck he walks is of planks loose in their fasteners. He sees in them a collection of old faces—gray and wrinkled, knots appearing as blinded eyes. The planks complain as he steps on them, sigh as he moves on, their blind eyes watching.

From his elevation on the deck, he can see his town—dusty roads, wash on the lines, a hound dog pissing on a fence post. His is an old town with a stable population—twelve-hundred thirty-six it says if you come US 40. But the sign has been there for years, and Millie at the grocers says that twice the people have left than have arrived.

He seems apprehensive, this man, as from one end of the deck to the other he ambles, his mind undirected but busy, his future overflowing if blank on specifics. He has made a commitment—simple and easy then, but complex and overwhelming as he thinks of it now. It could absorb him completely. The idea is terrifying.

A woman on the five-forty is coming to see him—they planned it that way. They had met in the city at a bar where music played loudly, liquor flowed freely, and people were boisterous and gay. They found a mutual liking there—a physical attraction, a meeting of minds, an empathy shared based on loneliness if some on alcohol. All of it grew over their next few days as they discovered their similarities—the same to eat at restaurants attended, movies they liked, and sex.

They walked the parks and plazas during the day, attended the clubs at night, swapped bodily fluids during the interim moments of close exploration. But then, at what appeared a new plateau, he said he needed to leave as things were piling up

in the town where he lived... and to soften his interruptive abruptness, he suggested she might like to visit.

Having no ties of consequence in the city and him alone in her present view, she agrees to come, and maybe, they thought, to stay. She thinks at the time, what the hell, time is marching, and she knows no other offering this kind of promise—if only implicit.

She watches the countryside slide by her window and listens to the clickity-clack from big iron wheels over joints in the rails. Leaving now seemed not all it had promised when made, and she feels uneasy as this will be new and possibly discordant. She had never been out of the city before and feels a tightening of sorts—things closing in, air thickening and harder to breathe.

Of course, she enjoyed this guy for those days of theirs, appreciating significant mutual perspectives, the few differences small and only with trivial things. And she had come to think while with him that her life in the city had little dimension. And she tells herself now, bags packed and carried closer, if things don't work out there was always a train going the opposite way. Clickity-clack

He is ordinarily a guy who thinks thoroughly through a problem or process before acting, is certain of outcomes, and will whittle away until only one. He likes the indemnity of certainty and has never been seriously hurt. But this woman, their immediate bonding, and the promise implied with her visit fell clearly outside that methodical progression.

Yes, they'd had fun—excitement in bed, shared viewpoints, likes and dislikes, even the same flavor ice cream, but that was not the examination he ordinarily made, and it bothers him now. She's coming, and she might stay—her undies on the line out back, their integrated toilets crowding the sink, she on his side of the bed. His wants and needs will change to "theirs," to what extent he believes the worst. He turns, starts back across the planks, hears them groan, notes their blind eyes watching.

She has made these hasty—she didn't call them careless—decisions before. Spur of the moment pivots while happily distracted from a look at tomorrow. She would run off in an alluring direction, then feeling uncomfortable struggle to return. Is this one of those... clickity-clack? Her life isn't great, but she likes her routine if only with its minor, infrequent variances. Every morning, from her studio into work. Lunch with Agnes at Emile's and what to do that night—TV, the clubs, the neighborhood bar? Well, she could change it all if she wanted. And it came to her now that she enjoyed her independence, the freedom to think and act as suited her. She was fond of a broad acceptance, prized her openness, and she knew little towns—confining and orderly, all but the iron bars. Clickity-clack.

Would the woman like Bowser? He hadn't mentioned. Would Bowser like her, a bigger question. If Bowser liked—a teddy bear with nuzzles and kisses, but if he didn't, a full-fueled Rottweiler protecting his territory. Problems—and there'd be others. Some he could see, but the where and the what of things, currently resolved, would all come anew with a vote. And others he can only imagine out in his future would all lead to compromise. He leans against a post supporting the roof of the old station and rubs his chin, the blind eyes from the planks asking, has he made a mistake?

The woman turns from the window and signals the conductor, asks about changing her plans. She would not disembark at her designated stop but go on to the next, then catch a return to the city. He makes a notation on her ticket, takes seven dollars, and says something into a two-way that he carried.

The man on the platform watches as the signal turns green and the five-forty speeds through—window following widow, strangers sliding quickly by. Clickity-clack. He smiles a lasting smile as the final car disappears from sight, and nods his head at the eyes in the planks. Maybe stop at the Rexall for a cherry phosphate, dinner with Bowser, then the *Evening Gazette*. —WT

Fifty Years Later

by Michael Shipp

The Correa family threw Tommy a big party after his tour in Viet Nam was over and he came home. He was going to be stationed at nearby Fort Ord which was some kind of lucky. Tommy was married to Dolly the Correas' only daughter. She had six brothers. I was best friends with number five, Stanley, who was one year younger than I.

Mike, the father, taught me and any kid that wanted to learn, how to play baseball. We lived on a cul-de-sac, which is a fancy French word for Dead End Street. It was perfect for playing ball because it got very little traffic.

Mary, the mother, fed any neighborhood kid who was hungry. You don't know how heavenly a fresh, handmade, warm flour tortilla is unless you've had one. The things you find today on store shelves are garbage by comparison. There is no comparison.

Tommy's party started at noon and went well past midnight. Friends came from every little town in the long valley. Soledad, Greenfield, King City and even further south to Paso Robles. From the north, Tommy's brother drove straight down from Washington.

Tommy and Dolly kissed and the fiesta was on. Stanley snuck out a pint of Crown Royal. I drank the first, second and third beers of my life. Dickie, the eldest son, gave me my first shot of Cuervo, which I downed like a mucho macho man then vomited up like a sick baby. Everybody but me thought it was hilarious.

Tommy and Dolly loved each other and we all loved them. They were perfect for each other, but I had been in love with her first. Long before Tommy. Dolly was my first serious crush. When I was ten she was sixteen. Your first crush never dies.

Dolly was pretty with a beautiful smile and a wonderful laugh that made you want to laugh with her. She had cute freckles on her cheeks like sun kisses on a super ripe apricot. I thought she was the sweetest thing in the world and kept my feelings to myself. I was young and dumb, but I wasn't stupid.

Stanley and I played marbles, ping-pong, and pool. Sometimes we played Mo-

nopoly with Freddy and Roy until late at night. When Roy was the banker you had to watch him like a hawk because he liked to embezzle. On weekends, Mike would hit us grounders, and if he wasn't around, a bunch of us kids played Three Flies Up.

Somehow, when I was sixteen, Dolly and I were alone in the house, in the den, on the couch watching an old movie. I had wanted to kiss her for the longest time and knew it was my chance. I scooted closer about to make my move but couldn't do it. I didn't chicken out. Tommy was in Viet Nam and it just wasn't right. Fifty years later I still remember the feeling.

For some dumb reason during Tommy's party I decided to confess to tell him that I loved Dolly too. I can't remember if I did. Somewhere along the way I passed out under the pine tree in the front yard. Dickie poured a bucket of water over my head and Chito carried me home. Thankfully my parents were asleep.

The next day I woke up to a very unpleasant surprise. The very first hangover of my young life. My head felt like a rotten avocado, my stomach a beat-up punching bag. I was forced to use the toilet. First I had diarrhea, then I had to ralph as quietly as I could. I didn't want to be discovered. I wanted to go back to bed.

Around noon there was a knock on my door.

"Tommy's at the front door," my mom said. "He wants to talk to you."

Oh crap! I thought. "What's he want?"

"He wants to talk to you."

I went to the front door afraid to look him in the eye. I mumbled, "Hey Tommy."

"Get your lucky boots, Wedo," he said. "We're going down to the river to hunt rabbits."

Wedo was my nickname. It meant Blondie in Spanish. "I don't feel so hot."

"Join the club."

"Stanley and I are going to the Fox to watch *Son of Flubber* later."

"Stanley's in the truck. Go get your boots."

"I don't know." I didn't know but my mom did.

"You're not going to lay around the house all day," she said.

I had a suspicion she knew I was hurting and wanted me to suffer more to learn

some kind of stupid lesson. I had slept in my clothes. I tugged on my boots and said, "I need to make a couple sandwiches."

"We got chips and sodas and burritos left over from the party."

I followed Tommy to his truck. Stanley sat in the middle of the cab seat. Solo, his dog, was tied up in the bed. Stanley looked ten times worse than I felt. His eyes were bloodshot and you could see the pain behind them.

Tommy stunk of tequila. Stanley smelled like an empty whiskey barrel. I reeked of vomit and rolled down the window for fresh air to keep from puking. Only Solo was having any fun.

I rolled my pants legs down over my lucky boots to protect them from the brush. Custom made, alligator skin Tony Lamas that must have cost over two hundred dollars brand new. I got them at the Goodwill Store for four bucks. They were two or three sizes too big for me, but I would grow into them; I stuffed socks in the toes to make them fit.

Salinas is home to the California Rodeo in July every year, and people go crazy over western wear that they wear for a week. The rest of the year those clothes hang in closets forgotten, and eventually some are donated to charity.

My Tony Lamas were hand-tooled works of art, the sides decorated with a gold horse with a red rose in the center. The toes were capped with an ornate silver tip. I certainly didn't wear them in the corrals to kick cow shit around. I was saving them for the day I had my own horse.

We drove to the river and parked in the shade of a huge oak. I untied Solo. Stanley got out and immediately puked. It looked like menudo. Tommy took the two guns from the rack in the cab, sat on the tailgate, and took a pint from his back pocket.

"You go, Tommy," I said. "I'll wait here."

"Man up, little man." He shoved a beer in my hand.

"No way, Jose."

"It'll make you feel better."

I sipped the beer only because I was dying of thirst. Tommy carried the shotgun, Stanley the 22, and I carried the lunch sack.

Continued on Page 13

Contests and Markets

by Carolyn Donnell



Carolyn Donnell
Contributing Editor

Let us know if you have any success with any of the contests listed in Writers Talk. (Or any other contest for that matter.)

Send your writing victories to membernews@southbaywriters.com You can also check other branches for their current contests or submission requests. See a list of other CWC branches at <https://calwriters.org/cwcbranches/>

To members of our Facebook group, South Bay Writers Club: see contest postings and other notifications.

Listings are for information only. **NO VETTING** has been done by South Bay Writers Club. Some contests have been around for a long time and the reputation is known but some are newer. Please read all guidelines carefully before submitting. And please share any experience you have with them. Good or bad.

CONTESTS WITH UPCOMING DEADLINES

Writer's Digest: Short Short Story Competition. Early-Bird Deadline, 11/16; regular deadline, 12/14. Prizes: 1st \$3,000, 2nd \$1,500, 3rd \$500, 4th – 10th \$100; 11th – 27th \$50 gift certificate. <https://www.writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/>

Soul-Making Keats Literary Competition (community arts outreach program of Nat'l League of American Pen Women). Prizes: 1st \$100, 2nd \$50, 3rd \$25. Previously published works OK in every category except Novel Excerpt. Deadline: postmarked by Nov. 30. Awards event: Sunday, March 21, 2021, at the SF Public Library Main Branch, Koret Auditorium. <http://soulmakingcontest.us/contests/guidelines-rules/>

Two contests posted on Peninsula branch Facebook Page:

- **Carve Magazine** Prose & Poetry Contest. Prizes: \$1000 each for one winner in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Deadline Nov.15. <https://www.carvezine.com/prose-poetry-contest>
- **Cinematic Short Story Competition.** Grand prize \$1000. Deadline Nov. 30. <https://screencraft.org/shortstory/>

The Voyage YA Short Story Award. Ends November 15. First Chapters Contest, \$3,500 total awarded. Seeking YA story, 5,000 words or less, contemporary, romance, fantasy, science fiction, genre-bender, and more! 1st \$3000 and an hour-long consultation with Literary Agent Saritza Hernandez of Andrea Brown Literary Agency. 2nd \$300, 3rd \$200. Finalists also receive written feedback from Literary Agent Saritza Hernandez.

2021 Academy of American Poets First Book Award.

Deadline Nov 14. \$5,000 first-book publication prize. Winner also receives an all-expenses-paid six-week residency at the Civitella Ranieri Center in the Umbrian region of Italy, distribution to Academy of American Poets members, and promotion in *American Poets* magazine.

<https://poets.org/claudia-rankine-judge-academy-american-poets-first-book-award>

Regal House Publishing current contests and submissions:

<https://regalhousepublishing.submittable.com/submit>

- Terry J. Cox Poetry Award: Nov. 23, 2020 – Jan. 31, 2021

RESOURCES: LOCAL AND OTHER CWC BRANCHES

The Literary Nest: A local online publication. See details for future submissions at <https://theliterarynest.com/> Also visual art high res .jpeg, .gif, or .png format to theliterarynest@gmail.com

Sand Hill Review: Stories, non-fiction articles, and poems. <https://sandhillreview.org/>

Catamaran Literary Reader: West Coast quarterly literary and visual arts journal. Fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and fine art. Submissions year-round with quarterly production cycle. <https://catamaranliteraryreader.com/>

Fremont Area Writers lists many resources on their page, such as Contest Announcements, Publications Seeking Submissions, Freelance Jobs, Resources for Screenwriters. Genre Organizations, and more .

AWP Association of Writers and Writing Programs. See at <https://cwc-fremontareawriters.org/resources-writers/>

West Trade Review Reading period Apr. 1st -Jan. 2nd Original and unpublished works of fiction, poetry, and photography by both new and established writers/artists. Our Kelly Harrison is an associate editor; she says right now is a time to get a good read. <http://www.westtradereview.com/submissionguidelines.html>

OTHER CONTESTS AND SUBMISSIONS:

The Blue Nib: Essays/Journalism, Reviews, Poetry, and Fiction. They pay for items accepted for print but not for digital. <https://thebluenib.com/submit-to-the-blue-nib-2/>

The Write Life: 31 Free Writing Contests with Cash Prizes. <https://thewritelife.com/writing-contests>

Sequestrum Literature and Art: "competitive, paying market which publishes high-quality short fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and visual arts on a rolling basis." Previously unpublished. Nominal reading fee. Can subscribe. See link for details. <https://www.sequestrum.org/submissions>

Poets & Writers: See upcoming contests/ deadlines here. https://www.pw.org/content/upcoming_contest_deadlines

Association of Writers and Writing Programs: <https://www.awpwriter.org/contests/overview>

Electric Lit: Free or Cheap Resources for Emerging Writers <https://electricliterature.com/free-or-cheap-resources-for-emerging-writers/>

The Writer Magazine: See their list of upcoming contests, articles, resources and you can subscribe to their newsletter. <https://www.writermag.com/contests/>

The Vincent Brothers Review: Submissions in fiction, non-fiction and poetry: \$25 per accepted item. Also on this site: Deanna Pickard Memorial Prize, a poetry chapbook contest for women over 50 who have not yet published a chapbook. <https://vincentbrothersreview.org/submissions/>

RESOURCES FOR POETS:

Writing Matters: 30 Publishers of Poetry Books & Chapbooks. <https://randalssanctuary.wordpress.com/2020/08/11/publishers-of-poetry-books-chapbooks/>

Up The Staircase Quarterly: Submit 3-6 poems in a single document. Submit up to 10 .jpgs for art. No previously published poetry, but previously published artwork is okay. <https://www.upthestaircase.org/>

Poets & Writers: Lists poetry and other contests. https://www.pw.org/blogs/prize_reporter. Also lists over twelve hundred literary magazines. https://www.pw.org/literary_magazines

The Thimble Magazine: A quarterly online journal. <https://www.thimblelitmag.com/submissions/>

Poetry Pacific: Literary e.zine, 2 issues per year, Spring and Fall. Published and unpublished welcome as long as you still have the rights. <https://poetrypacific.blogspot.com/>

Authors Publish: Poetry Manuscript Publishers. No fees. <https://www.authorspublish.com>

Trish Hopkinson: a blog. <https://trishhopkinson.com/where-to-submit-reprints/>

Ace World Pub: Submission lists. <https://aceworldpub.com.ng/category/latest-opportunities/>

Poetry Foundation: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org>

Everywriter: The Best Poetry Prizes. Lists poetry prizes and competitions. <https://www.everywritersresource.com/best-poetry-prizes/>

Some **Facebook Poetry Groups:**

- Poetry Center San Jose - PCSJ
- Willow Glen Poetry Project
- Cupertino Poet Laureate
- Santa Clara County Poet Laureate
- Los Gatos Poet Laureate
- National Poetry Month-write a poem a day challenge
- California Poets
- How Writers Write Poetry Community Group
- No Fee Calls for Poems
- SF Creative Writing Institute drop-in poetry workshops

OTHER RESOURCES:

(* On both the Internet and Facebook.)

- *Poets & Writers:* * https://www.pw.org/content/upcoming_contest_deadlines
<https://www.pw.org/grants>
- *MWA NorCal Chapter:* * Mystery Writers of America <https://mwanorcal.org/>
- *Women's National Book Association: San Francisco Chapter:* * <https://wnba-sfchapter.org>
- *The Write Life :* * Contests. <https://thewritelife.com/writing-contests/>
- *Funds For Writers:* Contests, submissions, grants, etc. <https://fundsforwriters.com/contests/>

- *Freedom With Writing:* * submissions, contests, jobs, and more. <https://www.freedomwithwriting.com/>
- *Authors Publish:* * <http://www.authorspublish.com/>
- *The Best Writing Contests* curated by Reedsy <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-contests/>
- *NewPages Classifieds:* <https://www.newpages.com/>
- *Hidden River Arts:* Book award deadlines listed at <https://hiddenriverarts.wordpress.com/>
- *ProWritingAid Writer's Community:* Facebook group
- *Writers Post No Fee Call for Submissions:* Facebook group

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT:

Nonfiction Writers Conference

Invitation from Cheryl Callighan, Nonfiction Writers Association

Email: NFWCOrganizer@gmail.com

<https://NonfictionWritersConference.com>

Since 2010, the Nonfiction Writers Conference events have been conducted entirely online, so we have a great track record of delivering content-rich events to attendees from around the globe. Our events are delivered LIVE with Zoom webinar and include Q&A with the speakers.

Past speakers for our events include Julia Cameron, Gretchen Rubin, Cheryl Richardson, Seth Godin, Dan Poynter, and Guy Kawasaki.

Join us for the Fall Nonfiction Writers Conference, happening November 12 & 13, 2020. Featuring 8 speakers over two days and content-rich learning sessions, this event is completely virtual. All sessions are delivered via webinar, so you can attend from anywhere—no travel is required!

Writers Weekly 24-Hour Short Story Contest

Writers Weekly runs a contest four times a year. You register on their website with a \$5 entry fee. Download the guidelines PDF and read carefully (it is a long list!) They send an email with a prompt on Saturday morning (10 am PST) and you have 24 hours to write a story based on the prompt and submit. (You must be entered in the contest before the topic is posted in order to submit your story. You cannot write your story first, then enter the contest.) The next contest will be in January 2021. <https://24hourshortstorycontest.com>

Even if your tale doesn't win a prize you have a good start on a story. My second novel, *Deeper Colors*, came from a short story that originated from one of these prompts. I have also produced other short stories and sometimes a chapter for a larger product. The prompt that generated the story "Where She'll Be Safe" was from the summer 2020 contest. (It will be a chapter in an in-progress novel, *Death on Route 66*.)

The prompt: Their trips to the drive-in movie theater were always the same. He would fall asleep and she would quietly leave the vehicle to get popcorn, Milk Duds, and soda. As she walked back with her goodies, the car-side speakers stopped and the screen went black, throwing the entire lot into darkness. She stopped, temporarily blinded. Then, the screen lit back up again, showing...

Continued on Page 12

Where She'll Be Safe

by Carolyn Donnell

The trips to the drive-in movie theater are always the same. Jerry falls asleep and I am the one who has to go get popcorn, Milk Duds, and soda. He never takes me out to eat or even to a movie at a regular theater any more. I've never been to his place, don't even know where he lives.

"Whoa." My legs wobbled and I looked down at my feet. I had told Jerry that I might be expecting but all he did was hand me that glass of wine before we left my apartment.

"It will relax you," he had said.

I had been feeling queasy for days now and didn't want to make it worse with alcohol so I only took a couple of sips. I managed to pour most of it in the potted plant by the window when Jerry turned his head for a moment.

I clutched my stomach as I tried to take another step. Suddenly the car-side speakers stopped and the screen went black, throwing the entire lot into darkness. I stopped and rubbed my eyes, temporarily blinded. Then, the screen lit back up again. The camera panned back in, revealing a yard with a swing. A little girl was laughing as a tall dark-haired man swung her back and forth. It was me.

"Higher, Daddy," I cried out. "Higher."

The man laughed. "This is as high as we go."

The swinging and the laughter went on for a while.

Now I was floating down a river, but I didn't have to swim—just relax and float—and observe. Jerry, my white knight, had come at last I thought when I first met him. The love, the dreams. Then the fights. The deliberate (I could see clearly now) setups and betrayals. He was just using me from the very start.

In the dream I watched as he put something in that last glass of wine before handing it to me and urging me to drink. The look on his face ... I should have been upset, but the water that surrounded me somehow insulated me from the bitterness. I was merely an uninvolved observer of someone else's life.

Beeps and a buzz broke through the peaceful repose. I heard a voice.

"She's responding."

I woke up. White ceiling tiles stared down at me white wall, white sheets. A tube was taped into my right arm. My eyes continued from the tape, up the tube and over to the window. Someone stood looking out the window. Was it Jerry? No. It was someone—a lady with long black hair. She turned around.

"Mother?" I mumbled.

"Cheryl." She walked to the bed.

"What are you doing here?" I asked.

"How did you—" I glanced around the room. "Where am I? What—"

I gasped as the memories returned. How long had I been here? I had lost track of time since my collapse at the drive-in.

Mother put her hand on mine. "Sh. Don't fuss. It's ok."

"But," I started.

"Don't worry. I am taking you home. Where you belong."

I could only stare at her.

"You and your baby."

"My baby?"

One of the nurses who was monitoring the IV in my arm spoke. "Yes. It was touch and go for a while. We thought you might be trying to abort, but it looks like that has stopped." She looked at my chart. "Yes. It does look like you are still pregnant."

"Abort?" I could barely get the word out.

"Yes, the nurse glanced at the chart again. "Something you drank earlier this evening? Were you trying to cause an abortion?" She glanced at the wall. "We are required to ask."

"No! The wine? Jerry?" I realized I had said his name out loud and began to shake.

Mother stepped in front of the nurse. "Stop with the questions. Leave her alone. She's been through enough tonight. Give her a sedative or something. I've already made arrangements to take her home with me where she'll be safe."

The nurse nodded. The last thing I remember was a pinch in my arm, followed by a sliding back down to the river of dreams. —WT



Drat! I lost my cellphone.



Drabbles

OK, what's a drabble?

A drabble is a short work of fiction of precisely one hundred words in length. The purpose of the drabble is brevity, testing the author's ability to express interesting and meaningful ideas in a confined space.

Ken Roberge has been experimenting with writing drabbles. His piece, "Sling Shot," follows.

Here's your challenge: write a drabble for *WritersTalk*. —WT

Sling Shot

by Kendad (K. Roberge)

"How many days have you had your arm in that sling?" Joan asked.

Kim adjusted her strap. "A week."

"How's Jake taking it?"

"Oh, the usual complaints, but he understands now that housework and cooking is tough."

"Seriously! He cooks?"

"Just barely, but I still praise him. His meals aren't all that bad."

Joan chuckled. "Just don't ask me to dinner."

"It's amazing how Jake has been nicer to me. It reminds me of how wonderful our first year of marriage was."

"That begs the question," Joan said. "How long before your arm heals?"

Kim smiled. "My arm's not broken." —WT

Fifty Years Later

Solo led the way around the manzanita. A covey of quail took off in flight too quick for Tommy to get off a shot.

We hiked for an hour and found nothing to shoot at.

"Can we go now, Tommy?" I asked. I just wanted to go home.

"We can't go without firing the guns," Tommy said. "Let's have some target practice."

"Whatever," I said. I couldn't see straight.

Tommy placed three soda cans on rocks, paced off fifty yards, and scuffed a line in the dirt with the heel of his boot then took a pull off of his pint.

"You want a snort?" he asked me.

"Hell no."

"Suit yourself."

Stanley put his hand out for the pint. He took a sip and groaned.

"Okay, Wedo," Tommy said. "Now close your eyes."

I did as I was told without thinking. I heard someone step towards me and opened my eyes in time to see Tommy aim the 22 at my foot. His finger started to squeeze the trigger and I jerked away. The bullet shot through the toe of my boot.

"What the —" I freaked out.

"I'm trying to do you a favor," Tommy said.

"By blowing my toe off?"

"If you can't march, they won't take you. You don't want to go to Nam."

"You don't think, I don't know that?"

"It wouldn't have hurt that much. The leather would slow the bullet down some."

"You're drunk."

"Not that much."

Stanley was laughing. I didn't see anything anywhere near funny. I sat and pulled the boot off. The bullet had ripped through the topside and the sole. There were three holes in the wadded sock. It the boot had fit he would have plugged me in the big toe.

Stanley couldn't stop laughing. I was too scared to cry.

"Why the hell didn't you shoot Stanley?" I asked.

"He won't have to go. He's got two brothers that already served." Chito had been an MP in Viet Nam and Freddy had served in the Air Force.

Stanley's laughter stopped only because he had to catch his breath. I put my boot on and picked up the shotgun. Had Tommy lost it in Nam?

"Tommy, you know there's a draft lottery now, don't you?"

"Why take the chance? This way you're covered."

"I'm kinda fond of my big toe."

"You got two of them. Losing one won't matter much."

"How 'bout I shoot you in the ass? You got two butt cheeks."

"It wouldn't have hurt that much and then you'd be safe."

Tommy looked away and started crying. Stanley opened a beer and chugged half of it. Solo sat down in the shade of shrub oak. It seemed like he was the only one with any sense.

"My friend's leg was blown off with a grenade launcher. He begged me to kill him," Tommy sobbed. "I couldn't do it."

What do you say to that? I said nothing. Stanley finished his beer and I started one. Tommy tried to get a hold of himself. I ate half of a burrito and fed the other half to Solo.

"Look," Tommy pointed.

Half a dozen rabbits were hopping around a sand bar at the edge of the river. Tommy handed me the 22. It was a long shot, and I carefully aimed with the gun-sight, taking a bead on the one rabbit that stood still. I lowered the rifle and pointed.

"Go get 'em, Solo."

The dog raced off and scattered the rabbits, chasing one across the shallow river, then disappeared into the willow bank on the other side. Half an hour later he returned panting and grinning from one floppy ear to the other. We hiked back to the truck, sat on the tailgate drinking warm beer, and nobody said anything.

—WT



POETRY

Behind the Veil

We've not yet met in waking hours,
But I feel your presence everywhere.
How can I be so lonely while awake?
When, behind the veil, you're always there?

My dreams of you are so real,
That when I awaken alone in bed,
I swear I can still almost feel
Warmth where you laid your lovely head.

As I stumble through the fog of painful days
That a glimpse of you could relieve,
I sometimes feel you're the only thing real
And all else is make-believe.

Though you're out of sight in broad daylight
And my waking eyes say you're gone,
My heart holds precious memories.
Your veiled presence lingers on.

Seeing you in daylight hours
Is my holy grail.
I'd give my life for a single peek
Of you behind the veil.

I dream of the day my open eyes
Can see in great detail
What I know I'll finally find
When I look behind the veil.

So, wait for me, my lifelong love.
My search for you won't end
'Til I can hold you in my arms
When we're awake, dear friend.

We'll stand as one to say I do.
I'll lift the veil from your face
To see your joyous eyes and smile
For a kiss in love's embrace.

—Russ Towne



Where Do You Live?

By Marty Sorensen

I received an email from CoverageBook, and I don't remember how I signed up for it, if I did, which I doubt, but probably didn't know I was doing it.

The email purports to be about the differences between search data and social data. And then there's a quote from their marketing webinar. "If people live their best life on Instagram, they live their real life on Google." Let that sink in: best life, real life.

There in a nutshell is what these people think we do all day. I don't put pictures up on Instagram, but I do use Google every day, and I'm confident in saying that most people do. Well I don't actually use Google, I use DuckDuckGo because it doesn't track me.

What I find amazing and shocking came next in the email: social vs search data.

Apparently, Instagram is social data, from people who know that they are being observed by others. And so they lie and misrepresent themselves from time to time. Let me digress right here: I'm writing to people who actually hope they are being observed by others.

Social data reveals how people want to be perceived. Search data, on the other hand, reveals what people are really thinking; it's frank and honest. So Google reveals what people are really thinking. Because it tracks the Googlers. Because on Google we turn to the Internet for help and advice when we're too embarrassed to ask our best friend or even our doctor. Our most candid and gut-wrenching thoughts and fears. These are literal quotes from CoverageBook. The purpose of all of this is to get a true understanding of people. You know, like about their best life and their real life.

I see pictures on Instagram from friends and family. That's what Facebook is for. I

look up stuff on a search engine, too. All the time. But a real life? Is that all there is? I remember a quote from some time back, from Ann Lyon: "Writing is a way to live another life."

For example, Roald Dahl: "You become a different person, you are no longer an ordinary fellow who walks around and looks after his children and eats meals and does silly things, you go into a completely different world. I personally draw all the curtains in the room, so that I don't see out the window and put on a little light which shines on my board. Everything else in your life disappears and you look at your bit of paper and get completely lost in what you're doing. Time disappears completely. You may start at nine in the morning and the next time you look at your watch, when you're getting hungry, it can be lunchtime. And you've absolutely no idea that three or four hours have gone by."

Google that experience. —WT

HUMOR

Decorating Emergencies

by Luanne Oleas

We always think it will happen to someone else. I know that's how I felt. Though I watched my friends succumb one by one, I felt a privileged immunity to their weakness. Then, it happened to me.

I recently experienced my first decorating emergency. One minute I was making a cup of java and the next, I was rushing downtown without even checking what shade of blue I needed.

I can't explain this phenomenon. I only know I had to stencil the back bathroom but fast! It quickly became an addiction, and my supplier was the local hardware store.

It's a well-known fact, listed in *The Book of Well-known Facts* by I. Knowitall, that the average hardware store conducts 195 business transactions on a standard business day. It's also a well-known fact that all 195 sales are made to only three people, each of whom made 65 separate trips to the establishment.

These numbers increase proportionally when factoring in the distance between the decorator's premises and the supplier's location. For example, if someone wants to paint a small room and lives within two miles of the paint store, the painter will only forget three things. The need for each forgotten item will only be discovered after the car returns to the driveway.

If a painting enthusiast lives three or more miles from the distributor, the number of return trips increases by a factor of one for every five miles beyond the initial two-mile radius. If you live more than 25 miles from the hardware store, it is suggested in *The Book of Well-known Facts* that you buy your own hardware store. (Your local hardware store will sell you whatever you need.)

If you are a novice experiencing your maiden decorating emergency, you can figure out the exact number of trips you will make to the store by working the above equation in base 8. Trust me—and *The Book of Well-known Facts*—you don't want to know.

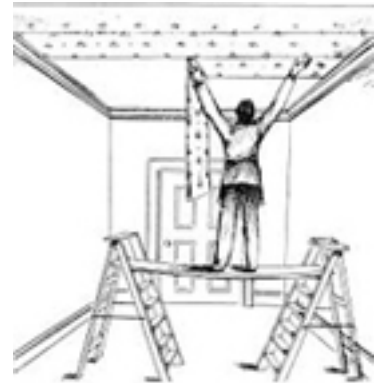
One of my friends, Jan R. (her real name) is a veteran of more than 1,000 separate decorating emergencies. There's a well-worn path between her house and every paint supply, lumber yard, and arts and craft store in the area. To break the cycle, she joined Decorators Anonymous which meets in True Value's stock room on alternating Tuesday evenings. They operate under a 14-step recovery plan because 12 steps proved inadequate.

"I could feel the walls closing in on me," Jan said in her testimonial to the group. "I mean that literally. I had applied so many coats of paint that my house actually lost square footage."

The other members all understood her plight and now I do too. I used to look at my house and notice the dirty dishes or what was on TV. Now, magazines with decorating tips have replaced my coffee table books.

When I close my eyes, I envision spectacular, dried flower arrangements gracing my table and wallpaper borders that match the slip covers on my furniture. I'd join Decorators Anonymous if I hadn't seen them refinishing the 14 steps.

—WT



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
November	2 2020	3	4 7:00P SBW Board, Zoom	5	6 Open Mic	7
8	9 2P Valley Writers 6P SBW PROGRAM ZOOM	10	11	12	13	14
15 D e a d l i n e WritersTalk	16 2P Valley Writers Zoom	17	18	19	20 Open Mic	21
22	23 2P Valley Writers Zoom	24	25	26 	27	28
29	30					

Future Events:

TBA. All zoomed directly to you.
*Calendar page is more or less blank
because everybody Zooms these days.*

SBW Board Meetings

Look for announcements of Board meetings. Contact Edie Matthews at pres@southbaywriters.com.

SBW Regular Meetings

Watch your email for announcements and for invitations to Zoom meetings. Every second Monday, 7 p.m.

Ads in CWC Bulletin

by Bob Isbill (760) 221-6367

Want to increase your visibility? Sell your service? Promote your book? Increase speaker engagements? Pump up your web traffic? Or just send a greeting?

Each issue of *The CWC Bulletin*, published three times a year, reaches 2,000 published and aspiring writers in 21 CWC branches throughout the state and is published on www.calwriters.org

Now we are accepting writing-related advertising from businesses, CWC members, and individuals who wish to reach our target market at reasonable prices. See calwriters.org for details and how to format your ad.

Open Mics

South Bay Writers Open Mic on Zoom. On first and third Friday nights. Contact Bill Baldwin (408) 730-9622 or email WABaldwin@aol.com

Ongoing discussion groups

Facebook Group: Members of SBW can join our Facebook group—South Bay Writers Club. Admin: Carolyn Donnell

SBW Recommends ...

If you know of a regularly occurring event for writers, send an email to newsletter@southbaywriters.com.

CWC Around the Bay

For years, *WritersTalk* published meeting locations and times for other CWC branches in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. If you want to attend one of their meetings on Zoom, first check their websites for details.

Berkeley: cwc-berkeley.org

Central Coast: centralcoastwriters.org

Fremont Area: cwc-fremontareawriters.org

Marin: cwcmarin.com

Mendocino: writersmendocinocoast.org

Mt. Diablo:

cwcmtdiablowriters.wordpress.com

Napa Valley: napavalleywriters.net

North State: northstatewriters.com

Redwood: redwoodwriters.org

Sacramento: cwcsacramentowriters.org

SF Peninsula: <http://cwc-peninsula.org/>

San Joaquin Valley: trivalleywriters.org

November is National Novel Writing Month:

NaNoWriMo

**Nonfiction Writers Conference
November 11 and 12**

<https://NonfictionWritersConference.com>

Please note:

To preserve the editor's sanity, we need to return to the traditional submissions deadline, the 15th of the month, to help us to deliver *WritersTalk* by the first of the following month.



Speeding WT to you



California Writers Club
South Bay Branch
P.O. Box 3254
Santa Clara, CA 95055
www.southbaywriters.com

MAIL TO

Address Correction Requested

**South Bay Writers
November Regular Meeting
7 p.m., Monday, November 9, 2020**

**ZOOM
Details arrive in your email**

Pace Your Narrative Like a Pro

**Heather Chavez
November Speaker**

WritersTalk deadline is the
15th of the month to have
delivery by 1st of next month.
Regular meetings are second
Mondays 7 – 9 PM on Zoom

